

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 GUATEM 05046 102331Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----080971 102333Z /63

P R 102302Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7097
INFO AMCONSUL BELIZE
AMEMBASSY LONDON

S E C R E T GUATEMALA 5046

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR GT UK BH
SUBJ: BELIZE

REF: GUATEMALA 4808

1. I HAVE HAD TWO CONVERSATIONS LAST NIGHT AND TODAY WHICH,
TAKEN TOGETHER, GIVE US SOME INSIGHT INTO ATTITUDES HERE TOWARD
NEGOTIATIONS WITH UK ON BELIZE.

2. WHEN I ASKED FOREIGN MINISTER MOLINA TODAY IF THERE WERE
ANYTHING ON BELIZE, HE SAID NO, REPEATING TO ME THAT HIS
NEXT CONVERSATION WITH ROWLANDS WOULD BE IN US ABOUT SEPT 20.
HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT, IN ADVANCE OF HIS MEETING WITH ROWLANDS,
THEY MIGHT SEND REPRESENTATIVES TO LONDON TO DISCUSS THE QUESTION
OF THE TERRITORIAL LINE. HE SAID HE HAD NOT YET TALKED TO THE
PRESIDENT ABOUT THIS BUT THAT THIS WAS "THE IDEA." I ASKED
WHEN THESE REPRESENTATIVE WERE LIKELY TO GO TO LONDON;
HE SAID THEY WOULD PROBABLY GO AT THE END OF AUGUST OR
DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF SEPTEMBER.

3. LAST NIGHT IN A CONVERSATION WITH FORMER FONMIN ROBERTO
HERRERA-IBARGUEN, WHO IS MEMBER OF THE GOG NEGOTIATING

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TEAM AND WHO HAD ORIGINALLY TOLD ME OF THE BRITISH SUGGESTION
THAT A TEAM VISIT LONDON BE FORE THE SEPTEMBER TALKS, HE
LAMENTED THAT NOTHING WAS BEING DONE TO PURSUE THIS SUGGESTION.
HE SAID HE DID NOT KNOW WHY THIS WAS SO, WHETHER IT MEANT
THAT THE PRESIDENT AND FOREIGN MINISTER WERE SIMPLY NOT
INTERESTED NOW THAT THE CRISIS HAD PASSED. HE RECALLED
WRYLY THAT, JUST AS THERE WERE NO PREPARATIONS BEING MADE

NOW FOR THE NEXT ROUND OF TALKS, SO NONE HAD BEEN MADE FOR LAST ROUND OF TALKS EITHER. IMPLYING THAT HE AND SKINNER-KLEE FAVORED FOLLOWING UP ON THE BRITISH INVITATION, HE NOTED THAT THEY WERE ONLY DIPLOMATS AND THE SIGNALS HAD TO COME FROM ABOVE. WHEN I POINTED OUT THAT MOLINA HAD BEEN AWAY VISITING OTHER LATING AMERICAN CAPITALS AND PERHAPS SOMETHING WOULD BE STARTED AFTER HIS RETURN, HERRERA SAID HE HAD TALKED TO MOLINA ON MONDAY AND ASKED HIM WHEN THEY WERE GOING TO MEET ON BELIZE BUT MOLINA HAD PUT HIM OFF. HE SAID HE HAD INVITED MOLINA TO DINNER TONIGHT AND PERHAPS SOMETHING WOULD COME OUT OF THAT.

4. HE SAID THAT A LOOK AT THE CALENDAR MIGHT POSSIBLY EXPLAIN THE PRESIDENT'S AND FOREIGN MINISTER'S ATTITUDE. IF THERE WERE NO PREPARATIONS FOR THE CONVERSATIONS IN SEPTEMBER, LITTLE WOULD COME OF THEM AND THAT WOULD MEAN THE NEXT STEP WOULD BE CONSIDERATION OF THE ISSUE AT THE UN, PERHAPS IN NOVEMBER. EVEN A STRONGLY WORDED UN RESOLUTION WOULD NOT COMPEL DEFINITIVE ACTION FOR SOME MONTHS AND, BY THEN, THE PRESIDENT AND FOREIGN MINISTER WOULD HAVE HANDED ON THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE NEXT GUATEMALAN ADMINISTRATION FOLLOWING THE ELECTIONS IN MARCH. BUT THIS WAS DANGEROUS, HE SAID, AS THE NEXT ADMINISTRATION WOULD HAVE LESS ROOM FOR MANEUVER. HE SAID HE WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH ME IF THERE WERE DEVELOPMENTS ON WHICH HE THOUGHT WE COULD BE OF HELP.

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5. COMMENT: WHILE WE CAN DISCOUNT TO SOME EXTENT HERRERA'S PESSIMISM ABOUT GOG PICKING UP INVITATION TO DISCUSS THE BELIZE LINE IN LONDON SINCE HE IS EVIDENTLY NOT YET PRIVY TO FOREIGN MINISTER'S THINKING; THE PICTURE AS WE HAVE IT DOES SUGGEST THAT THE GOG IS NOT PURSUING THIS CRITICAL ISSUE WITH GREAT URGENCY. HERRERA IS NOT THE FIRST TO SUGGEST, OF COURSE, THAT THE PRESENT GOG LEADERSHIP MAY SEE ITS OWN NARROW INTERESTS BEST SERVED BY BEING ABLE TO HAND ON THE BELIZE ISSUE TO THEIR SUCCESSORS. IT MAY BE THAT MOLINA IS CONFIDENT ENOUGH THAT THEY CAN REACH A SATISFACTORY DEFINITION OF THE LINE DURING THE CONTEMPLATED VISIT TO LONDON THAT HE NEED NOT BE IN A GREAT RUSH, BUT THIS WOULD SEEM A RATHER OPTIMISTIC VIEW.
BOSTER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SITUATION, TERRITORIAL CLAIMS, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 10-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977GUATEM05046
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770288-0673
Format: TEL
From: GUATEMALA
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770878/aaaacnun.tel
Line Count: 110
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 58cf305d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 77 GUATEMALA 4808
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1650377
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BELIZE
TAGS: PBOR, GT, UK, BH
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/58cf305d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009